

point. The fact that a lawyer has not served a "rotational tour out of specialty" for a period of time does not make him any less knowledgeable about the details and workings of Coast Guard programs, and should not serve to create the impression that he has no knowledge or background in other Coast Guard programs—that he is "only a lawyer." The broad exposure and experience that a Coast Guard lawyer has in a wide variety of Coast Guard programs, and his involvement in those programs while he is doing his job as a lawyer, serve to build qualifications almost equivalent to those he would obtain while serving "out of specialty." In a sense, a Coast Guard lawyer's "specialty" is the entirety of the Coast Guard's programs.

I am not trying to tell anyone that Coast Guard lawyers are any better than any other Coast Guard officers—what I am trying to say is that Coast Guard lawyers are not anything less than other Coast Guard officers. The fact that a Coast Guard officer is a law specialist does not mean that he has some very specialized, narrow background, and that he knows nothing about the "real" Coast Guard. Coast Guard officers who are law specialists continue to learn, grow, and expand their backgrounds and knowledge of the Coast Guard and its programs in the same way that other Coast Guard officers do in their non-legal assignments.

Coast Guard lawyers should be considered as competent and as qualified as any other Coast Guard officer when it comes time to compete for assignments and top level management positions, regardless of the program; and when it comes time to compete for promotion. The fact that a Coast Guard officer is a law specialist should not be considered against him; should not be considered as a limitation on his ability or his utility to the Coast Guard as an officer or as a manager.

I hope that this article has served to create an awareness of what a Coast Guard lawyer is, what he does, and what his background, knowledge, and experience becomes even though he has been serving "in specialty."

We are all Coast Guard officers or we wouldn't be wearing the uniform, and most of us have specialized training in some field or another. Career Coast Guard officers, regardless of their specialized training, and regardless of their source, are excited by the Coast Guard and its programs, and want to become a meaningful part and participant in those programs. Don't sell Coast Guard lawyers short in terms of their background and experience simply because they are lawyers. We are not lawyers in uniform, we are Coast Guard officers with a specialization in law. Coast Guard lawyers are part of the "team," fish, fowl, or whatever else a Coast Guard officer is.

The Search For Captain Frederick Lee

by Paul H. Johnson, Curator, USCG Museum

Four decades of cadets have been intrigued by the Aldis Browne mural in the old Academy Library (now Henriques Hall) depicting the defense of the cutter EAGLE at Negro Head. Paul Johnson here reports exciting new historical findings with respect to this event and the gallant skipper involved—Captain Frederick Lee.

For more than a decade I served as Academy Librarian in Hamilton Hall, surrounded by the fascinating historical murals painted by Aldis Browne in the late 1930's. One panel in particular intrigued me. That is the panel illustrating the defense of the cutter EAGLE in 1814 under command of Captain Frederick Lee.

Outnumbered by a British naval force, Lee beached his cutter on the north shore of Long Island opposite the Connecticut town of Guilford. Undaunted, Captain Lee ordered his men and local volunteers to haul the six

cannon from the beached cutter to the top of a high hill known in those days as Negro Head.

Firing from the height of Negro Head, Lee kept the British at bay for more than a day. A contemporary account has it that pages from the cutter log were used as wadding for the cannon. Cannon balls fired by the British brig DISPATCH were collected and fired back at the enemy. At a time when American morale was low, following burning of the White House and other reverses, Lee's spirited defense was widely hailed in the newspapers and greeted with jubilation by Americans

far and wide. When the enemy squadron withdrew, Captain Lee and his men hastily refloated the cutter. However, the vessel had been damaged and the British ultimately seized her. That all happened in October, 1814, and the war ended several months later.

Having been born and raised on Long Island I was more than casually interested in the site of the EAGLE defense. I had never heard of a place called Negro Head. What puzzled me even more was the absence of any photographs of the site in our photo archives. Surely, I thought, the Coast Guard must have investigated a battle site so near to the Academy and so illustrious a part of our service history.

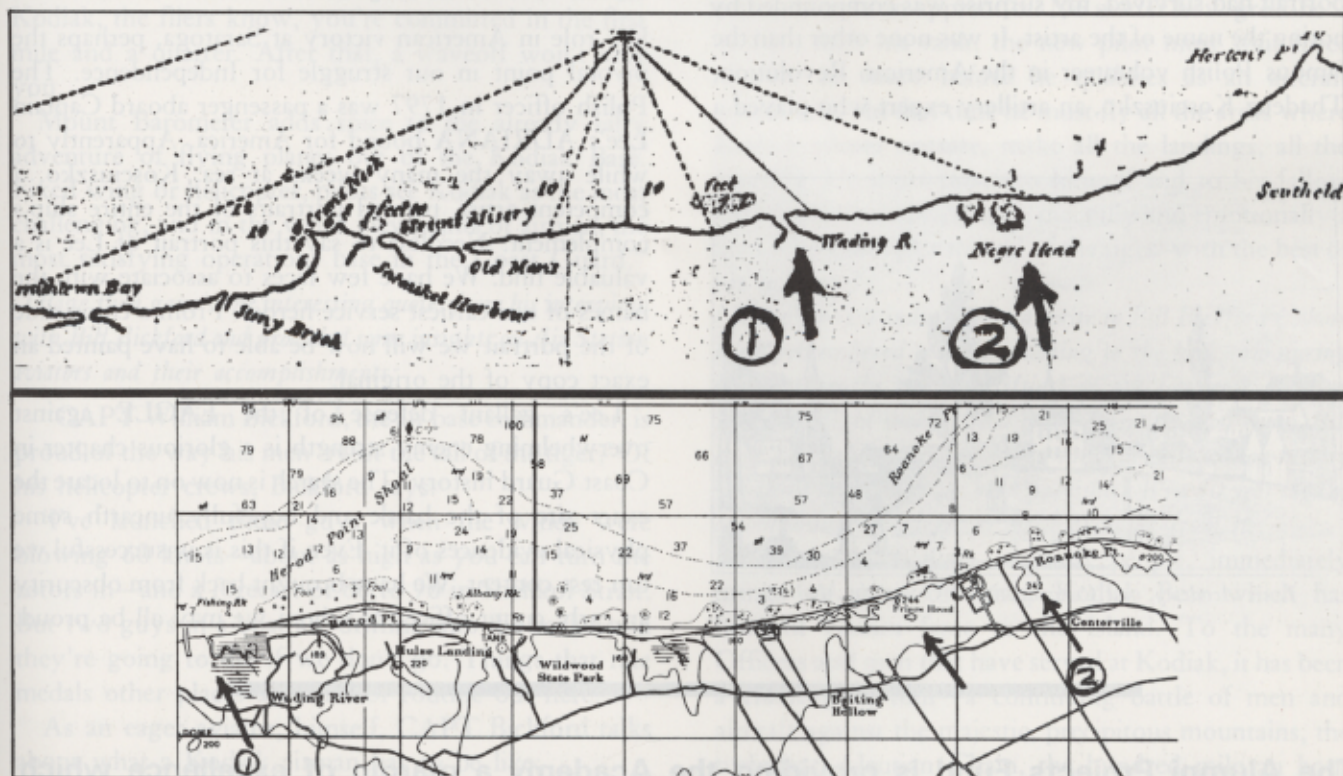
Perhaps it was the impact of the Bicentennial observance or the continuing interest in cutters named EAGLE. Whatever the cause I resolved this year to find the battle site, photograph it and perhaps retrieve one of the buried abandoned cannon. I soon discovered why all this had not been done by my predecessors. The simple frustrating fact is that the name Negro Head was discarded as a place name some time in the mid-19th century. At least one old timer in the Riverhead area remembers the name in local usage but a search of modern topographic maps shows no such name.

I started searching back through old chart collections at various historical societies and Yale University. This

disclosed an 1813 chart showing a Negro Head some eight miles east of Wading River, a place name which has survived. Maps in the American Coast Pilot of 1845 show two "bumps" or elevations in this area, corresponding fairly well with two elevated spots which appear in modern topographical charts. We haven't precisely identified the hill as yet. But we're closing in.

In the course of this investigation some interesting new leads developed. In discussing my problem with A. O. Victor, the Yale Curator of Maps, I mentioned the name of the EAGLE skipper, Captain Lee. To my astonishment Mr. Victor revealed that he had purchased at an auction two items once the property of Captain Lee. One object was an engraved silver pitcher given to Lee in recognition of his efforts in 1819 to rescue the crew and cargo of the ship BETSEY, grounded near Montauk Point. Since the cargo was whiskey the testimonial refers appropriately to Captain Lee's "spirited exertions". Mr. Victor also owned Captain Lee's knee length stockings (which he kindly donated to our Coast Guard Museum).

Further investigation revealed a wealth of information on Captain Lee's life. He was a well known local figure. Born in 1766, too late to participate in the Revolution, he became a seafaring man and in time was



The upper chart is from the 1817 Coast Pilot; the lower one is from modern Long Island Sound chart #12355. Wading River appears on each, marked by Arrow #1. The easternmost elevation on the old chart, labelled Negro Head and marked by Arrow #2, appears to correspond with the 242' elevation called Roanoke Point on the modern chart. It is due south of Guilford and approximately 8 miles east of Wading River. The other elevation is probably the 244' Friar's Head rise.

master of his own vessel, the ADRIANA. He came into the federal cutter service in 1809 at the age of 43, through appointment by Benjamin Lincoln, Collector of Customs at Boston, to command New Haven's cutter, EAGLE number three. His activities ashore were equally noteworthy. He was one of the founders of Madison, Connecticut, a town named after Lee's favorite Democrat, President James Madison. Lee served as the first moderator of the Madison Town meeting and represented that town in the State Assembly. He founded a school in Madison called Lee Academy. The building still stands although it is now used to exhibit historical materials. Most interesting, perhaps, is the statement by the Madison historian that the school belfry contains "a bell from an old revenue cutter"—perhaps one of the several New Haven cutters to bear the name EAGLE. A close inspection of the bell will require someone to climb to a precipitous perch on the steep roof. Any volunteers?

My investigation then took me from Madison to nearby Guilford, where Lee had been born. There, in the 1639 stone house known today as the Whitfield Museum, I discovered Lee's sword on display—totally unrelated to the house itself.

Another treasure emerged in the form of a small profile portrait of Captain Lee. Aside from the fact a portrait had survived, my surprise was compounded by noting the name of the artist. It was none other than the famous Polish volunteer in the American Revolution, Thadeuz Kosciuszko, an artillery expert who played a



Captain Frederick Lee at age 31 when master of the ADRIANA.

key role in American victory at Saratoga, perhaps the pivotal point in our struggle for Independence. The Polish officer in 1797 was a passenger aboard Captain Lee's ADRIANA bound for America. Apparently to while away the many weeks at sea, Kosciuszko, a competent artist, painted portraits of the entire ship's complement. Needless to say this portrait of Lee is a valuable find. We have few faces to associate with the names of our earliest service heroes. From a color slide of the portrait we will now be able to have painted an exact copy of the original.

Lee's gallant defense of the EAGLE against overwhelming enemy strength is a glorious chapter in Coast Guard history. The search is now on to locate the exact site of the battle and hopefully unearth some physical evidences of it. Even if this is unsuccessful we can rest content. We have brought back from obscurity an early cutter officer of whom we may all be proud.



Lee's Academy, and Congregational Church in Madison.

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